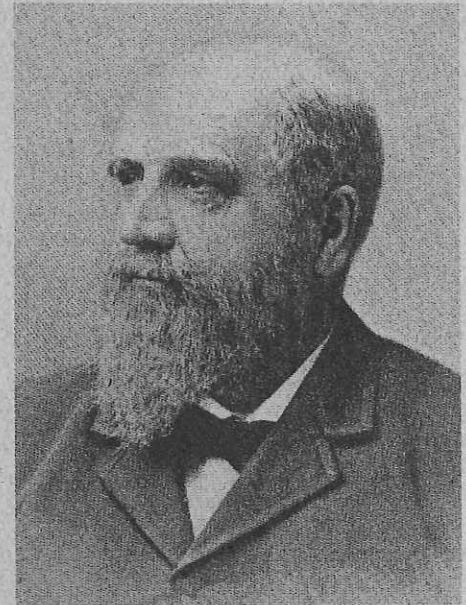


The Historical Trail 1991



*General
Clinton B. Fisk,
A leading layman in
the N.J. Conference*



*Mrs. Clinton
(Jeannette) Fisk,
Woman's Home
Missionary Society
Leader*

The Historical Trail

Yearbook of the Historical Society and the
Commission on Archives and History of the
United Methodist Church

Penny Moore, President of the Historical Society
Charles Green, Chairman of Commission on Archives and History
J. Hillman Coffee, Editor

FOREWORD

Since 1962, *The Historical Trail* has come to you once a year with interesting articles about our heritage. Much of this information would remain hidden if it had not been recorded by all of you who, through the years, have shared articles of interest about churches, people, cemeteries, and events commemorating historical markings along the way.

During this year of 1991, we shall be observing many historical events in Methodism: the 200th anniversary of the death of John Wesley, the landing of Boardman and Pilmore at Gloucester, and the 125th anniversary of Children's Day. Without doubt, many of our churches are also observing special services with us. Bulletins, programs, and pictures will be filed in the Archive Room at Pennington. Some information may be used in future issues of *The Historical Trail*. Send any material to our editor-in-chief:

Rev. Dr. J. Hillman Coffee
22 Lake Agape Drive, RR 1
Tabernacle, New Jersey 08088

This year's edition of the *Trails* brings articles of great interest about *Life Is a Song* by Miriam L. Coffee, *The Genesis of Methodism in Vincentown* by Betty Stover and the Reverend Robert L. Reasner, *Hedding United Methodist Church, Bellmawr* by Jack Lynch, and *A Time to Remember* by the Reverend Robert B. Steelman who also presents interesting facts and news of the Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History.

We give a sincere thanks to all contributors to and faithful members of our Conference Historical Society. We again invite each of you to join us in membership this year. We pray for God's peace and His blessings for us all as this booklet goes to press.

PENNY MOORE, PRESIDENT
S.N.J. Conference Historical Society

LIFE IS A SONG

by Miram L. G. Coffee

Across the southern New Jersey sands, down the "sawdust trail" of campmeetings, and from the hearts of southern New Jersey Methodists have resounded the harmony and words of our own hymnists proclaiming the message of salvation. Only God knows how the Holy Spirit has used these hymns to bring conviction to the sinner, comfort to the heart-broken, and strength to the weary and despondent. One commentator has remarked that Thomas O. Chisholm and C. Austin Milers alone have cheated the Devil out of thousands of souls with their hymns.

Inspiration, necessity, and dedication have all influenced this outflow of talent. These southern New Jersey hymn writers of the past had no discs to place in a computer to do most of the harmonization and other details for them! They had a message that inspired their talents.

Music has been called the universal language. The longest book of the Bible, the Psalms, is a collection of hymns. Hymns are an integral part of our worship. Jesus and His disciples, at the close of the Upper Room experience, sang a hymn before facing the last days of Jesus' life on Earth. Hymns, both words and music, can be inspired by God through a variety of circumstances in order to reach the needs of people.

The emphasis in this article is upon the message of the hymns rather than upon the hymnist. The words receive their effectiveness through the melody, rhythm, and harmony used. Use the same words with different rhythms and the *feeling* of the song changes. Words, however, give a specific meaning to the melody.

All of the hundreds—or thousands—of hymns written by southern New Jersey Methodist hymnists present some emphasis of the message of salvation. Three of these well-known and loved hymns seem to summarize the wide scope of life and God meeting humanity's need for salvation.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" resulted when Thomas O. Chisholm read Lamentations 3:22, 23: "They [the Lord's mercies] are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness." The opening stanza is taken almost directly from Scripture with affirmations about God whose "compassions" will never fail.

The second stanza shows that God's faithfulness comes from God's immutability. God is alive! God is eternal!

Nature shows God's faithfulness. Winter always follows summer. Harvest always follows the planting of summer. Innumerable stars, the

sun, and the moon move in such a fixed, predictable pattern in the sky that they can be charted by astronomers thousands of years in advance. All nature witnesses God's "great faithfulness, mercy, and love."

The last stanza speaks of God's faithfulness in His dealings with humanity. God fulfills all of His pledges (promises): pardon for sin, lasting peace, His presence to provide cheer, guidance, strength, and hope.

What more can we desire? Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me. God makes it a personal commitment to each one of His creation.

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960) was a self-taught Methodist preacher-poet who believed God could inspire a song as well as a sermon. He was born in a log cabin in Kentucky, but he spent most of his life in southern New Jersey. When his health broke, he became an insurance agent.

Mr. Chisholm had many musical friends to whom he sent his poetry. They, indeed, were kept busy writing the music for his more than 1200 Protestant hymns which have been used by Billy Sunday, Homer Rodeheaver, and Billy Graham in their revival campaigns.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" has been translated into almost every known language and appears in hymnals of many faiths. George Beverly Shea introduced this hymn to audiences in Great Britain in 1954. The British so loved this hymn that it is included in the *Anglican Hymn Book* of 1965. The hymn is still often sung at British wedding services.

Thomas O. Chisholm died in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, at the age of 93.

"In the Garden," ranked as one of the top ten best loved Protestant hymns, recounts the story of the first Easter. Mary Magdalene arrives very early in the morning while "the dew is still on the roses" at the burial garden of Joseph of Arimathea. Mary brings ointments to anoint the dead Jesus, her great friend, so that His body will be prepared for burial.

Mary's ointments were unnecessary. The tomb was empty! Mary ran to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus had been stolen. After verifying the truth of Mary's message, the two disciples departed to tell the other disciples the news.

Mary, alone and despondent, was so lost in her own sorrow that she failed to recognize the voice of the Lord Jesus—"so sweet that the birds hush their singing." Mary, I believe, recognized Jesus' voice with her heart before her ears picked up the "melody" of this loved one's voice.

Mary wanted to stay in the garden to talk with Jesus, but "He bid me go; through the voice of woe." Mary had a job to do; she must

tell others that Jesus is alive. He is risen! What joy that "none other has ever known" to be the first to see and announce the risen Son of God!

Mary's experience is relived by every person who confronts the risen Christ and realizes His presence in the routine of daily life. Knowing Christ personally makes us want to stay in His presence forever, but we are God's only messengers and must obey His voice when He says, "Go and tell others that I died because I love them."

C. Austin Miles (1868-1946), the writer of both the words and the music of this beautiful hymn, was born in Manchester (Lakehurst), New Jersey. He was inspired while reading John 20 for his devotions. Mr. Miles, in his dark room with his organ and his photographic equipment, immediately wrote the words to the hymn. Later that evening, he wrote the music. Neither was revised. More than five million impressions of this hymn in practically every known language have been made.

Mr. Miles had a sense of humor. He sometimes wrote under the name of A. A. Payn (an achin' pain) and G. W. Payne (Gee, what a pain).

After many years as pharmacist in his own pharmacy in Camden, New Jersey, he gave up his drugstore because of ill health.

In need of money, Mr. Miles decided to sell some of his songs that had been written for his choir and for campmeetings. He sold the first three for \$2.50 each, but the publishing company paid him \$4.00 for "In The Garden."

T. O. Chisholm based his ideas for "Living for Jesus" upon the thoughts of Phillipians 1:21—thoughts of the dedication of one's life to Jesus. The hymn demands that we live for Jesus lives that are true and pleasing, lives that follow God's call and leading, lives of obedience wherever we are, and lives dedicated to winning others to Christ. This hymn is truly a challenge to our souls.

Early, persecuted Christians *died* for their Christian faith, but is it any easier today to *live* for our faith—to live for Jesus? Is it easy to refuse promotions and better pay because we feel God has need of us where we are? Is sacrifice for Jesus easy? Is it easy to enact Jesus' ethics in the business or social world? Is it easy to keep our faith, our actions, our speech, and our integrity as Christians when we are with non-Christians? *Is it really easy to live for Jesus?*

Harold Lowden, the composer of "Living for Jesus," was practically raised on music. In the home, his mother would play the organ while his father played the trumpet while using his foot to rock Harold to sleep in his cradle.

Harold started playing the violin at age five. He became conductor of the large, Sunday School orchestra at age thirteen.

Harold Lowden published over 4000 hymns. When asked how he was able to write so many beautiful melodies, he replied that he had no special method of composing—he “simply keeps myself ready for when God speaks.”

Originally, H. Lowden wrote both the words and the music for this hymn, but he was dissatisfied with the words. The tables were turned when he sent the music to his friend Chisholm and asked for suitable words to suit the melody; thus, “Living for Jesus” was born.

Three hymns from three hymnists that depict three emphases necessary to enjoying a Christian life: belief and trust in God who is faithful to His promises; acceptance of the risen Jesus as our Savior; living according to Jesus’ precepts with the purpose of winning others to Christ.

Life is a song, sometimes in a major key but sometimes in a minor key. God writes the music. We choose the rhythm.

There is an abundance of southern New Jersey Methodist hymn writers, both past and present. We are rich in hymnology and greatly blessed. I personally believe more souls have been won to Christ through the so-called Sunday School, Gospel, Campmeeting hymns than through the more formal hymns of the church. People certainly enjoy singing these musical sermons.

At the annual meeting of the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the Commission on Archives and History in 1990, Hillman and I represented southern New Jersey with the presentation of these three hymns with their music. Because of the time limitation, only three could be used. Thelma Grovatt, a member of our Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society, wrote a poem to introduce the program. In the poem, other hymns are mentioned. The poem is printed with this article.

A Postscript

In 1986, the sesquicentennial year of Methodism in New Jersey at the New Jersey Conference, we remembered the working of the Holy Spirit through the hymns of our southern New Jersey hymn writers. Because of the historical emphasis, hymnists of the past were emphasized even though we have so many current hymn writers who have a great influence on our spiritual life today.

Facts

The following are just brief mention of a few other southern New Jersey hymnists:

Think of Dr. Charles A. Tindley (1856-1933), a former pastor of Franklin Street Methodist Church in Cape May. He often preached and sang throughout New Jersey and at the Annual Conference. This famed, black Methodist preacher was the son of slave parents. Among his songs is the well-known civil rights song, “We Shall Overcome.” His harmony for many of his songs was written by Dr. Daniel Ridout. I am sure many attending the Annual Conference remember these talented men when they kept Conference “lively.”

“Leave It There” “When the Storms of Life Are Raging”
“Nothing Between”

“Heavenly Sunlight” brings memories of Sunday School, Camp Meeting, and Prayer Meeting experiences. Rev. Henry Zelley (1859-1942), a Methodist minister and Conference treasurer, was a prolific writer of over 1200 Gospel hymns. “Heavenly Sunlight” is in the hymn books of most major faiths.

“He Rolled the Sea Away” “He Brought Me Out”
“Make Me a Blessing” “Because He Loved Me So”

“No, Not One” within one year was included in hymn books of thirty-five different faiths. It became a great missionary hymn after it was translated into Japanese and Chinese. The composer, Rev. Johnson Oatman, Jr. (1856-1926), was born in Lumberton, New Jersey. While selling insurance policies (to earn money for food), Rev. Oatman would baptize babies or conduct funerals. Most of his hymns were composed as he traveled by horse and buggy through the Pinelands.

“Count Your Blessings” “Higher Ground”
“He Included Me” “I Will Follow Thee”

“Fill Me Now” was the result of a prayer of Elwood Haines Stokes (1815-1897), a president of Ocean Grove. Professor Sweeney, writer of the music, while on his knees in prayer, thought of a little prayer of President Stokes that ended with “Fill me with Thy Hallowed Spirit, O come and fill me now.” The praying musician stated, “God seemed to speak the melody right into my heart.”

President Stokes is from a Quaker family and was born in Medford, New Jersey. One can see his bronze monument facing the ocean and standing in front of his greatest achievement and dream, the great Ocean Grove Auditorium.

Mrs. Carrie Breck, a frail woman who often had to rest between her household chores, would write her hymn-poems while resting in her rocking chair on the back porch of her home in Vineland, New Jersey. Her hymns recorded in her notebook are a result, at times, from her children playing around her. "I Want My Life to Tell for Jesus" is popular as a quartet number.

"Help Somebody Today" "Nailed to the Cross"
"Face to Face"

The words and melody of "Sanctuary" were written by Dr. E. M. Coffee. The harmony was provided by James H. Fleetwood, a Methodist layman. Dr. Coffee, an osteopathic physician, was a local preacher serving several churches in the Southern New Jersey Conference as well as being an active layman of the First Church, Collingswood, New Jersey. Many of his compositions have been used for choirs and orchestras. "Sanctuary" is a dramatic choral number depicting the battle between good and evil, Satan and Christian pilgrims. Jesus, the door to heaven, provides a sanctuary for the faithful believer.

"Hymn of Faith" "Communion Intermezzo"

Annie Johnson Flint, a Vineland native, was unable to walk because of arthritis. She used her pen to express her love for God in many hymns:

"What God Hath Promised" "He Giveth More Grace"

Linda Shivers Leech of Merchantville has had more than 500 hymns published:

"Some Day He'll Make It Plain to Me"
"God's Way Is the Best Way"

Rev. Edgar Page Stites of Cape May wrote his hymns primarily for his church services: "Beulah Land."

Rev. John Stockton of Paulsboro wrote for his choirs, worship services, and campmeetings:

"Down at the Cross" "Glory to His Name"
"The Great Physician" "Only Trust Him"

Rev. Harvey VanSciver, pastor of the Central U. M. Church in Linwood, New Jersey, is one of the many hymn writers of today. For the 100th Anniversary of the Asbury Park United Methodist Church, he wrote "Our Times Are in Thy Hands." For the Music Festival at Ocean Grove, he wrote, "The Word - Now Give We All Our Maker's Praise." He also wrote a lovely anthem for church choirs entitled "Prayer" and for confirmation classes, "Lord, on Their Confirmation

Day." There is a great need for music pertaining to specific events in the church life.

Our thanks and gratitude to the many hymn writers of the past and present who have given Methodism such a world of treasures through sharing their talents.

A Parable of New Jersey Hymn Authors

*The Gospel Hymns that were written in Love,
Have a story to tell about Him above.
They were written with Grace and Conviction too,
By New Jersey Authors, who had much to do.*

*They labored in Love, in pain and more,
To give us the Hymns that opened the door.
"God Hath Not Promised," skies always blue,
But Annie Flint promised, her music so true.*

*Lida Leech wrote, "Some Day He'll Make It Plain To Me,"
and "God's Way Is The Best Way" we can see.
More than five hundred hymns, we are told,
they are worth more than Silver or Gold.*

*"Count Your Blessings" was a blessing to all,
As Rev. Oatman traveled through the Spring and Fall.
Esther and Ruth Duvall, sisters with Faith in the Lord,
Wrote "Dear Tender, Great Physician" and trusted in His Word.*

*"Sanctuary" written by Doctor Coffee, a healing man of God,
He charged us Christian Pilgrims, the right path to trod.
"Great Is Thy Faithfulness," Rev. Chisholm penned,
All we have need of, He provides to the end.*

*"Rev. Zelley offered, "Heavenly Sunlight," that never would fail,
Singing His Praises over mountains and through the deep vale.
"Living for Jesus," C. Lowden wrote the score,
And Chisholm the words, his heart did outpour.*

*C. Austin Miles, "In The Garden" his melody,
Wrote, "He walks and Talks with you and me."
Together we'll remember these famous works and more,
And know that these Hymns are sung Shore to Shore.*

Written by Thelma Grovatt—Tabernacle, New Jersey

THE GENESIS OF METHODISM IN VINCENTOWN

by Rev. Robert L. Reasnor and Betty Stover

One hundred sixty-three years ago our church was born. What sparked it? How did it happen? What was it like? Who were its leaders?

Methodism had its seeds planted in the soils of Burlington County as early as 1774 as its itinerant preachers passed through even Vincent's Town leaving behind an influence long before the town existed or the church was born.

The area we now know as Southampton Township had its earliest ministry under the preaching of Rev. John Brainard, missionary to the Indians.

The Brainard Missionary Church was located at the Indian village or town on the bank of the Coaxon or Quakeson Creek about a mile south of the present town.

That early church was moved to land by the Stop-the-Jade Creek and stood next to the old schoolhouse near the rail depot.

"While the old pioneer church stood in this location it was free for all denominations except Roman Catholic and occupied by each in turn, and is pleasantly associated with the early history of the older inhabitants of Vincentown."¹

The old pioneer church was eventually taken down and moved to Freedom near the schoolhouse at that place. It was converted into a schoolhouse and late in 1871 or 1872 was destroyed by fire.

The second church in Vincentown was built by the Friends in 1781. It was constructed of logs and was used for many years until a brick structure was built in 1813. It stood on land given by Mrs. Anna Leeds to the Mount Holly Meeting of Friends on July 12, 1781, for five shillings.

The influence of Methodism began in Vincentown under Presiding Elder Solomon Sharp and preachers Jospeh Totten and Joseph Osborn.

It was about this time the old Quakeson Meeting House was moved to Vincentown and served the purpose of the church for a long time. The preachers of Pemberton (New Mills) Circuit made it a place of regular preaching services, nurturing the flock that became responsible for planting Methodism in Vincentown.

A young man named Samuel Dobbins was attracted to the old schoolhouse to hear Solomon Sharp. The word of God reached his heart. A while later a class was formed and he was chosen as its leader.

¹History of Burlington County, pg. 426, *Everts & Peck*.

The class members were Elizabeth Dobbins, John Woolston, Lydia Woolston, Samuel Woolston, Hillman Dobbins, and Rebecca Dobbins. In 1828 the historical record shows the appointment of Bartholomew Week and J. McLauren to New Mills, now called Pemberton and Vincentown. Officially, the Methodist Church in Vincentown began with this appointment.

On December 21, 1829, it was incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey.

In 1829 William Granville and J. Moore were appointed the new pastors. It was under the leadership of William Granville a subscription-asking (fund-raising campaign) was circulated for a Methodist Episcopal Church at Vincentown.

Thirty-five one hundredths of an acre of land on Plumb* Street was bought from Asa Rogers and Beulah, his wife. The record shows the date of the deed to be January 4, 1830, and was granted to trustees John Woolston, Samuel Dobbins, Hillman Dobbins, Daniel Joyce, and Robert L. Robbins.

The new church was erected in 1830 under pastors Henry Boehm and Thomas G. Steward. Tradition says that Elijah Woolston, whose house was a home for the Methodist preachers, gave all the brick for the construction of this then new church.

In 1834 Pemberton was made an independent assignment and Medford Circuit appeared with Vincentown attached.

As the community increased in size, the church grew. In 1853 Rev. Cline found the old church on Plumb Street incapable of supplying the wants and was inconvenient and unsuitable in location and thus inspired the people to erect the present Main Street edifice. It was erected at a cost of nine thousand dollars and built of bricks which were made on the Haines farm on Newbold Road. The record shows the deed recorded May 20, 1853, purchased from Charles L. and John L. Sleeper and John's wife, Phoebe.

The bell that still calls worshipers to church was made in Philadelphia and was installed in 1854.

When Rev. J. W. Hickman came to Vincentown in 1855, he found the new church in an unfinished state. Under his leadership it was completed, the debt cleared, and some eighty converted and added to the membership.

On April 10, 1867, we find recorded the purchase of an additional parcel of land to expand the cemetery.

*as spelled on the original deed.



The sanctuary picture of the Vincentown Church (1853).

On July 16, 1868, an indenture indicates the purchase of the house and parcel of land east of the church from Frank H. Hilliard and his wife Lydia. We assume this to be the site of the parsonage next to the church where it was to be located until 1958.

Through the years the church has continued to bear its witness to the community and growth has been realized in numbers and in various physical changes.

From our records we find the first Children's Day in 1883 and in 1894 the formation of the Epworth League.

In 1922 the metal ceiling was installed by Rev. A. J. Smith himself and the church equipped with an electric plant.

On Thursday, October 18, 1928, at 7:30 p.m., a Centenary Celebration was held. From the program of that occasion: "It has been decided to have a silver tree to mark the event. We would like to replace the pews now in use with seats more modern and comfortable. We would also like to improve the electric lights. These things, however necessary they may be, can wait a little longer. There is one matter that cannot be delayed, and that is the painting of the church."

It seems the pews are *still waiting!* We also note the Willing Workers installed wood floors in the Sunday School room this year.

On May 24, 1931, a service of memorial and dedication was held for the "In Remembrance" table and the newly installed circular rail and kneeling pad provided by the Ladies Aid.

The financial records show the 1935 budget to be \$1731 of which \$1000 was salary. Fifteen years later the 1949-50 budget has increased to \$4102 with \$2000 of this used for salary.

Now, in 1978, we have a budget of almost \$47,000 with \$18,350 for salaries.

During the pastorates of Rev. Clifford Sinnickson and Rev. Harrison Thompson in the 1940's, the church was renovated and beautified inside and out.

In 1950 Rev. Thompson led the congregation to expand the educational facilities with the erection of a much needed annex for the work of the church school. On May 6, 1950, a bid was submitted by Stanley Hendrickson, a "barn specialist" from Pemberton. Included were pencil sketches and an agreement to build said addition for \$3650. The Board agreed; and almost 100 years after the church was built, a new step was taken in expansion.

Feeling among the people for a better residence for the pastor motivated the growing church to accept land on North Main Street given in memory of Henry I. Worrell by his daughter, Mrs. Ethel Robbins, on November 27, 1956.

In 1957 a contract was given to construct a split level house on the new land for \$14,500. In 1958 the pastor's residence was moved to this site.

In 1959 a second step was taken and the proposal accepted to purchase the Irick property next to the old parsonage for further educational space. This building was renamed "Asbury Hall."

In 1963 a Church Expansion Crusade was launched under Rev. Shull and over the next several years plans developed to construct a new educational building.

In 1968 a second crusade was launched under the leadership of Dr. Clifford Sargent of the Department of Finance and Field Service of the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church. A goal of \$40,000 was set by our congregation to be received over three years. Forty-five thousand dollars was pledged.

On March 16, 1969, ground was broken for the new building and on December 14, 1969, the congregation gathered in worship to lay the cornerstone. The construction costs totaled \$89,500.

As we started the new decade of 1970, we moved into the new facility. Shortly thereafter, a severe storm badly damaged the church roof and the Trustees were confronted with an untimely demand to re-roof the church. Assessing our total need, they decided to brick and side the annex behind the church at the same time.

Landscaping the grounds, erecting a new bulletin board, and painting the church allowed us to begin the 70's with a new image.

In 1972 feelings were expressed over the conditions of the parsonage. A proposal was made to build an addition and make improvements. The needs of the church plant and lack of funds had overshadowed the needs of the pastor's residence. An open house resulted in many feeling the best answer was to relocate the parsonage. In June, 1973, the residence was moved to a lovely ranch-style home on Ridge Road set amidst the laurel and oaks. The sale of the old residence made possible the purchase of the new site, and the memorial was moved to the new property.

Feelings were expressed by many at this time that the congregation should purchase the corner property adjoining the church. In 1974 this was accomplished, giving land for future expansion.

The Vincentown congregation enters a new phase of our history as we move from our second-story sanctuary and consecrate to God's glory these new walls, seats, and sacred area, where all can meet God. June 4, 1989, will stand as another milestone in the history of our church.

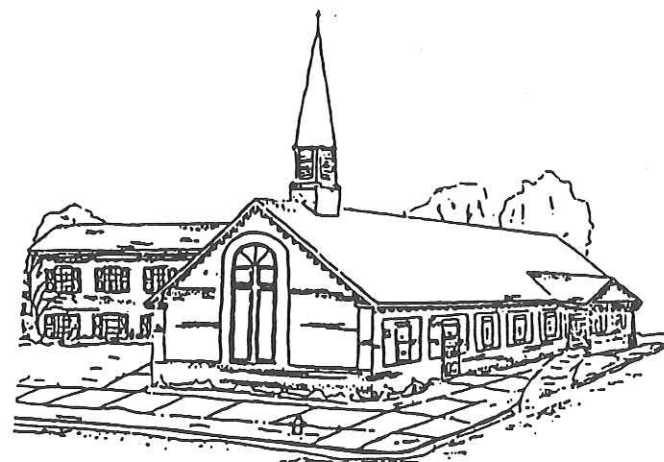
The need for many repairs to the sanctuary and the requirements of new building codes clashed, creating enormous problems with conformity.

In 1985, the pluses and minuses of change were weighed and the decision made to build a new house of worship at ground level, an idea that had been in concept since the 1960's.

Our concern for our own needs found us choosing in 1982 to first consider enabling another congregation to take form. Project 1983 was launched and \$10,000 raised to help build our sister congregation's church in Nunzo, Zaire. Rev. Kenneth Enright, United Methodist Pilot Missionary in Zaire, guided us in the undertaking.

The following five years were spent in preparation of our own project with feasibility studies, many field trips to visit other sanctuaries, fund raising, and endless hours of plan development. Those beginnings are brought to conclusion as our Service of Consecration and Cornerstone Laying become reality.

We now have a facility designed and planned to offer opportunity for worship to the healthy and the handicapped. Sight, sound, and mobility were considered in creating easier worship for all.



*The present sanctuary picture shows
the church built in 1989.*

Two guiding words in design development have been "functional and flexible." We endeavored to bring together space which can serve well for worship, and with little time or effort, offer facilities for concerts, dramas, and other art forms. Construction costs today demand multi-need and multi-use consideration while remaining consistent to theological architecture and true Christian stewardship.

How does one choose the design for a church? Step one was research — enlightenment through visits to countless other sanctuaries. Step two was concept development — defining our needs and wants. A choice of architect and many meetings on concept refinement brought rough ideas to form.

In part, the exterior appearance was dictated by our location in the Historic Preservation Area of our community. Such being the case, we have endeavored to incorporate the simplicity of line and form that are found in our community and surround the church in other buildings. Further, much of the exterior characteristics were taken from our 1853 facility. The seven-row brick pattern, piers, eve corners, and front window all adopt similarity from surrounding character. However, they were chosen to compliment, not copy.

Having settled our choice on the exterior, our next step became the interior. Our 1989 sanctuary, built in faithful response to the church

of today, is represented in the symbol of Methodism as seen above the emergency exit to the left of the nave. This work of art is the creation of Mr. William J. Mauthe. Each of the stained glass windows reminds us of another part of the message of Jesus Christ.

Entrances on Main Street, Grange Street, and Plum Street, as well as both levels of the educational wing, make it possible for anyone to enter for worship, from wherever one might be, regardless of physical condition.

The construction of office space inside the main door gives easy access for persons needing assistance. It further offers oversight of the building so that persons can enter to pray during the day.

The new sanctuary's spaciousness allows greater diversity for weddings, the possibility of funerals, and will allow our church's future to better serve our community in more meaningful ways.

For all and to all, to God be the glory. Thank you for the part you have shared.

HEDDING UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, BELLMAWR

by Jack Lynch

BELLMAWR HISTORY

Near the intersection of the Big Timber and Little Timber Creeks, just outside Bellmawr, is the supposed site of Fort Nassau, the earliest European settlement on the Delaware River. Early records name John Hugg as one of the first settlers in the area. Hugg, an Irish Quaker immigrant, was a man of considerable wealth. In 1683 he purchased from Robert Zane 100 acres of land for his homestead.

This land, including the present borough of Bellmawr, remained in the Hugg family for three generations. The name Huggville was given to the area. Hugg was said to have kept many slaves to work these lands. Ex-slaves of the Hugg family founded their own community of Guinea Town in present-day Bellmawr in the late eighteenth century.

The present Bellmawr developed from a settlement around the Hedding Methodist Church, founded in 1840. The importance of this church is unquestioned. Indeed, the area was called Hedding for many years. Graves in the cemetery beside the church date to 1842. The church is still in use on the Black Horse Pike.

The name Bellmawr is taken from the Bell family who, with the Marples, Brownings, Glovers, Budds, Zanes, Crispins, Starrs, Haines and Rowlands—to name a few—were the principal area land owners some one hundred years after Hugg. The Bell family purchase a large portion of the Hugg Estate in 1847 and for many years were noted breeders of Percheron draft horses. The original grant of 2,000 acres issued by the King of England in 1723 is still in the possession of the Bell family.

In 1831 Union Township was formed, consisting of Runnemede, Mt. Ephraim and Bellmawr. In 1855 it became Centre Township, with Mt. Ephraim as the Township seat.

By 1900 the town of Bellmawr had grown sufficiently to merit a village store, located at the Browning Road and Black Horse Pike intersection. There was also a hotel with limited accommodations and a "bottling establishment" which, no doubt, was much employed by practically everyone, excluding minors of course. This latter place was closed by Prohibition, never to reopen.

In 1906 Camden County constructed the Black Horse Pike from Bellmawr to Chews Landing, and in 1912 from Camden to Bellmawr. In 1926 the residents decided on self-government and incorporated

Bellmawr as a separate borough. Fred Collett was elected mayor, and by 1930 the population was 1,123. During the 1930's Bellmawr was in financial difficulty and very near bankruptcy. Borough Hall was constructed during the period under WPA.

The population started to grow after 1941 with the construction of Bellmawr Park, a federal housing project for war workers. By 1950 the town had grown to 5,213 persons, and the 1960 census reported 11,853. The growth in the 1960's had been very rapid due to housing development, apartments, an industrial park and an influx of families from Philadelphia area, attributed in part to the opening of the Walt Whitman Bridge, connecting Philadelphia and Camden County. According to the 1990 census Bellmawr now has a population of 12,547 within its 3.7 square mile boundary.

Bellmawr has attracted a great deal of industry, and at present there are over two hundred businesses in the community and the U.S. Regional Postal Distribution Center, which occupies twenty-six acres in the Bellmawr Industrial Park.

There are six churches in Bellmawr, four elementary schools, one junior high school, a 16,000-plus volume library and an active Senior Citizen Community building. The police, fire and ambulance organizations are renowned in the county. Mayor Joe Petruzzi and his council can be proud of Bellmawr as a progressive community in Camden County.

HEDDING HISTORY

Hedding United Methodist Church was founded on October 3, 1840. The first church building was small and of wood construction. It was located on Old Sandy Road, now Browning Road just east of the Black Horse Pike. It was built on land that was measured in link and chain, the way of measuring boundaries in those years.

The church was named after Bishop Elijah Hedding, then presiding bishop of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The village surrounding the church soon became known as Hedding.

Hedding was part of the Blackwoodtown Circuit, which included the towns of Almonessing, Chews Landing, Gibbsboro, Clementon, Jackson, Greenland, New Freedom, and Waterford. The Circuit Association was headed by Brother John P. Curtis. Curtis and other circuit riders felt compelled to keep their appointed rounds, carrying Bible, hymn book, discipline and books in their saddlebags. It became



Former Church which was torn down



Hedding U.M. Church today, Bellmawr, N.J.

a proverbial saying in foul weather that "nobody would be out but crows and Methodist preachers."

Several years after its construction, the small frame Hedding church was destroyed by fire and replaced with a larger building to accommodate a growing membership. This edifice, too, was consumed by fire. In 1896 a brick church was built on a rise of ground overlooking the Blackwoodtown Turnpike, now the Black Horse Pike. A landmark on the pike, Hedding was known for years as "the little red church on the hill."

The present location of Hedding, on which this church stood, including the cemetery, was given by Joseph Budd, father of Mary Clark, in 1866, and the said ground was to be used as a place of divine worship.

Membership in 1886 was sixty. The church was then connected with the Chews Landing Circuit with the board of trustees composed of Hiram J. Budd, Joseph P. Curtis, John Webb, John Williams, John Peters, and James McManus. A Sunday School of 85 members had George W. Barnes as its superintendent. Graves in the cemetery date back to 1842 and include Budds and Webbs.

Within four years of construction, the "little red church on the hill" was also damaged by fire, a suspected arson. The congregation met at the home of Brother Browning while the building was under reconstruction.

The fire plague struck again in 1941 resulting in the destruction of many old church records. Services were conducted in the Bellmawr Fire Hall while the building was being repaired.

There followed years of growth for Hedding and Bellmawr. The church building was used by the Board of Education for Bellmawr School commencements as early as the 1930s. During World War II the Defense Council requested use of the church bell for air raid alarms. In the 1960s Bellmawr School classes were held in rooms of the church. Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Cub Pack meetings were conducted in the church basement. Hedding was truly a community center.

For most of Hedding's history it was part of a Circuit with other church appointments. Most of its pastors were students or just out of the seminary. Their average length of service at Hedding averaged just over two years. In 1962 Hedding secured its first full time pastor and parsonage.

Hedding's organizations flourished and attendance increased. Church membership was over 200, as was the average attendance at Sunday School. This expansion prompted the need for construction of an

educational building on the property, which was opened in 1964 and dedicated in 1967 as the Emmanuel H. Fennimore Fellowship Hall. Sunday School classes were held there, and the Bellmawr Nursery School, a successful outreach program of Hedding, was formed in 1974 in the building. Youth group meetings, dinners, bazaars and other functions started to be regularly held in the Hall.

No doubt the saddest time in Hedding history was in May 1979, when it no longer became possible to maintain the "little red church on the hill," a landmark for 83 years.

The structure was loved by many, but the bricks were crumbling due to the effects of fumes from auto exhaust combined with the damage of rain and snow, and the cost of insurance and heat was becoming unworkable. After much discussion, the choice was to demolish the old building or close the church. Historical status was pursued, but federal approval would take years, and the budget could no longer cover the expenses of upkeep on this structure.

With the decision to demolish the building, many decided to leave the church. Those who remained were involved in the change of the sanctuary to the new building and not only grew closer together, but grew in faith. The United Methodist Men, led by Jack Woodcock and Jim Barker, spent over 1,000 hours on the renovation of the second floor of the new building as a sanctuary. The stained-glass windows from the old building were saved and erected in the new sanctuary on the walls, with back-lighting to enhance the colors. All in all, the new sanctuary is a beautiful work of art.

The stone tablet from the top of the old building bearing the church's name and the bronze bell from its tower are being refitted into a facade structure to be dedicated on Hedding's 150th Anniversary celebration on October 7, 1990.

So, despite the hardships of fire destruction and building demolition over the last century and a half, the spirit of Hedding United Methodist church survives and, as it has consistently done in the past, it continues to meet the challenges God has set before it.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

by Robert Bevis Steelman, Penns Grove, New Jersey

Address Given at Sea Bright United Methodist Church

Aldersgate Day 1990

At a Service jointly sponsored by the

Commission on Archives and History

and the

Historical Society

of the

Southern New Jersey Conference

It's a joy to be in Sea Bright tonight to speak before this Assembly. Represented here are the historical interests of the Conference, members of the Sea Bright Church, members of the Cluster Choir of United Methodist Churches, friends from the Fisk AME Church, named after the man we are here to remember, representatives of the Town's Officiary and probably other guests not mentioned by name. We are glad you are here, for this is an historical gathering.

This is the 3rd Spring Joint Meeting of the Commission on Archives and History, an official agency of the Southern New Jersey Conference, and the Executive Committee of the Conference Historical Society, elected by dues paying members of the same. In 1988, we met in the Historic Lumberton Church, a church made famous by Johnson Oatman who wrote such beloved gospel songs as "Count Your Many Blessings," and "He Included Me." While there, we toured the Azail Coate home where Bishop Francis Asbury, American Methodism's patron saint, was nursed back to health during a long fourteen week illness in 1814. Last year we assembled in the beautifully restored 1808 Pleasant Mills Meeting House which Asbury himself dedicated in 1809 and is now a United Methodist Historic Site.

We are in Sea Bright tonight because in three weeks, the Annual Conference will be asked to name this Church a United Methodist Historic Site, not because of the building or its architectural significance, but because of its associations in the life and Christian witness of General Clinton B. Fisk and his wife, Jeannette Crippen Fisk, the former of

whom is memorialized in the church's lovely stained glass window. It is a time to remember.

Actually, we are here to remember and to celebrate in remembering three things: the ascension of Jesus; the Aldersgate experience of Methodism's founder, John Wesley; and the life of General and Mrs. Fisk.

I. The Ascension of Jesus

Let's start with the big thing — the most important. Today is Ascension Day. You wouldn't have to remind a Roman Catholic of that; he or she, at least if they were a good Catholic, would know it. Every Catholic Parish had a Service today. We Protestants, at least of the Methodist variety, seldom know it is Ascension Day. And that is too bad. George was our neighbor when we lived in Bridgeton. Since he was a Pennsylvania farmer before moving in with his sister next to our church, he normally wore overalls. One lovely Spring morning, on my way to the Church office, I saw George, attired in a suit.

"What's the occasion, George?" I said.

"You know," he replied. Since I didn't know, this good Catholic had to tell his preacher neighbor it was Ascension Day.

We lose something when we forget the significance of Christ's Ascension. It is something of a mystery why we have allowed our faith in the ascension to fade nearly into oblivion. Every time we affirm the apostolic creed we affirm, "He ascended into heaven." Many churches boast that they "preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again," yet little is said about his ascension.

The New Testament writers had far more to say about Jesus than what he did while on earth or his death or even his resurrection. Jesus Christ was always the ascended, exalted, reigning Christ who one day will come again as judge of the living and the dead. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is the exalted Christ. Listen to Paul in Colossians 1:15-20:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus' ascension answers at least these questions:

(1) What happened to Jesus after he was no longer seen on earth? He ascended to heaven. Acts 1:9. 'When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.'

(2) Where is Jesus now? He is in heaven.

(3) What is he doing now? He is seated at the right hand of God. He is exalted to the place of power and authority.

All of which is to say that this Jesus in whom we are committed is the ascended one who forty days after the resurrection ascended to the place of divine power and authority. So we are here to remember and celebrate Jesus' Ascension.

Unfortunately omitted from the new United Methodist Hymnal is Charles Wesley's beautiful ascension hymn:

Come, let us rise with Christ our Head
And seek the things above,
By the almighty Spirit led
And filled with faith and love;
Our hearts detached from all below
Should after him ascend,
And only wish the joy to know
Of our triumphant friend.

Enthroned at God's right hand he sits,
Maintainer of our cause,
Till every vanquished foe submits
To his victorious cross;
Worthy to be exalted thus,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
The Lord, our King, who reigns for us,
And shall forever reign.

To him our willing hearts we give
Who gives us power and peace,
And dead to sin, his members live
The life of righteousness;
The hidden life of Christ is ours
With Christ concealed above,
And toasting the celestial powers,
We banquet on his love.¹

¹The Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 457.

II. Aldersgate

One who for more than half a century proclaimed the glory of the exalted Christ and called people to serve him was John Wesley, Methodism's founder. For we who are Methodists, today is our birthday. This is Aldersgate Day.

John Wesley was never far from the Kingdom. His soul and spirit imbued the piety of his parental home. He was never far from his godly parents' prayers. He usually sought friends who shared his desire for a more holy life. Upon graduation from Oxford he received holy orders. Back in the University as a Fellow of Lincoln College he led the "Holy Club" in its search for a deeper life and in its outreach of ministry and love, witness and action in its community and beyond. Volunteering his services as a missionary to Georgia, he returned with serious questions about his own faith and the assurance of his soul's salvation.

His own *Journal* words for May 24, 1738, 252 years ago tonight, described what happened:

I continued thus to seek it [i.e. faith, saving faith] (though with strange indifference, dullness and coldness, and unusual frequent lapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on those words: . . . 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' Just as I went out I opened it again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee; therefore thou shalt be feared . . . O Israel, trust in the Lord: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart.²

It was this personal experience of faith in Christ, the exalted Christ, that brought Methodism a-borning. We remember this Aldersgate Day and celebrate the inward reality of our own personal faith in Christ even as we seek a fresh warming of our hearts. We Methodists are not coldly ritualistic, nor do we tend to fly off in ecstasies of the Spirit. We are Bible believers whose faith is born of a deeply personal experience of the crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Christ. And so today we remember and remembering, we celebrate.

III. General Clinton B. and Jeannette C. Fisk

Tonight, our attention is focused on a man and his wife, General Clinton B. and Jeannette C. Fisk, who were spiritual heirs of John Wesley and joint-heirs with Christ.

One night in the fall of 1968, my supper was interrupted by a call from the Director of a Museum in Globe, Arizona. She wanted to know what I knew about General Fisk and the Methodist Church in Sea Bright. I knew we had a church in Sea Bright. I had never heard of General Fisk. She told me they were recreating an early frontier town in Arizona which included the first Protestant Church in the State which General Fisk was responsible for building. Sea Bright entered the picture because several persons from this church donated some of the appointments and attended, along with General and Mrs. Fisk, the dedication. I set out to discover who this man was. I also visited Sea Bright and met Allen Johnson, who shared with me his love and knowledge of this church's history. Tonight we are here to remember. Later, we can return to celebrate this church's designation as a United Methodist Historic Site because of its associations with the good General and his wife.

General Fisk was born December 8, 1828, in Griggsville, N.Y. At the age of two, his family moved to Michigan. He graduated from Wesleyan Seminary, forerunner of Albion College in Albion, Michigan. While still living in Michigan, he married Jeannette Crippen and worked

²Ward, W. Reginald, Ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition. Vol. 18, *Journal and Diaries*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988, 249, 250.

as a merchant and banker. In 1858, they moved to St. Louis where he became an agent for a large, eastern Insurance Company. When the Civil War broke out, Clinton Fisk, an ardent abolitionist, enlisted as a private, but was soon commissioned as a colonel in the 32nd Loyal Missouri Infantry. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1862 and Major General in 1865. After the war he became Assistant Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau for Kentucky and Tennessee. In this post he organized Fisk University, serving for many years as the President of its Board of Trustees. In 1874, President Grant appointed him President of the Board of Indian Commissioners.

In 1877, the Fisks moved east, living in New York City with a summer home at Sea Bright. They purchased a cottage, Elmwood, in Sea Bright in 1879, then moved to Rumson in 1885.

From their first summer in Sea Bright in 1877, the Fisks played an active role in the church here, often personally inviting and entertaining leading clerics of the day to preach in their "Fisherman's Chapel." The New Brunswick District Superintendent reported in 1889 that "Mrs. Clinton B. Fisk has it in her head to build a new church." She did and it was first used for divine service December 8, 1889. It was described as a combination of gothic and old colonial, "altogether unique and unlike any other church in the Conference." This church was dedicated in June of 1890 shortly before General Fisk's untimely death, July 9, 1890. This church, along with the parsonage was destroyed by fire, June 16, 1891. A year later, 1892, the present church and parsonage, valued then at \$30,000, was dedicated. Again, Mrs. Fisk took the lead in the church's rebuilding along with a Mr. J. M. Cornell of New York. The day before the church was dedicated, the General C. B. Fisk memorial stained glass window was presented by the New Jersey Conference and friends of the General.

Clinton and Jeannette Fisk were life-long members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The General's biographer says, "No single layman . . . has ever served the Methodist Church in such diverse and responsible positions, and for so long a time as he."³ He was a member of the denomination's Book Committee and Mission Board, was Vice President of the Freedman's Aid Society, served as a Fraternal Delegate to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was the Secretary for the northern delegation which met a like delegation from the southern

³Hopkins, Alphonso Alva. *The Life of Clinton Bowen Fisk*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888, 147.

church at the important 1876 Cape May Conference which established the basis for future Methodist reunion. He was a delegate to the 1881 Methodist Ecumenical Council in London, and confidant of the church's bishops. He and Mrs. Fisk, at least once, entertained the entire Council of Bishops in their Jersey Shore home.

The General was a trustee of his alma mater, Albion College in Michigan, Drew University, Dickinson College and Pennington School. The 1889 Conference *Minutes* lists him as 1st Vice President of the Conference Historical Society, trustee of the Preacher's Aid Society, and member of the Board of Church Location of the New Brunswick District.

He was elected a reserve lay delegate to the historic 1872 General Conference, the first to include lay delegates and was elected a delegate to all succeeding General Conferences until his death.

An ardent prohibitionist, General Fisk regularly appeared as a platform speaker on temperance days at all of New Jersey's camp meetings. He joined the Prohibition Party in 1884. He was their candidate for Governor of New Jersey in 1886 and for President in 1888.

All this may seem like a rather long recital of activities and accomplishments. It is given to show that here was a man whose ardent faith was in the exalted Christ. His heart was warmed at Methodist altars, and he and his wife gave themselves unstintingly to its cause. One hundred years ago there was probably no layman better known or more esteemed in the Methodist Episcopal Church than General Clinton B. Fisk. The same can be said for his wife.

Jeannette Crippen Fisk was an ardent spiritual daughter of Susanna Wesley. She ably assisted and supported her husband in all his efforts. Not so much is known about her background. In fact, she is usually identified as Mrs. Fisk, Mrs. C. B. Fisk or Mrs. General Fisk. You seldom find her first name. It is different today, as it should be, but not then. Yet, it was their combined efforts that led to the building of at least four Methodist Churches: Union Church in St. Louis in 1862, Globe Church in Arizona, the Sea Bright Church and Fisk A. M. E. Chapel. She, herself, after her husband's death, took the lead in building this church in which we are worshipping tonight.

Yet, in her own right, she played a significant role in women's work across the denomination. Recently she was named one of the "100 Women of Distinction in the United Methodist Church." She was the founding president of the New Jersey Conference Woman's Home Missionary Society, serving in that position from 1885 to 1896. During her term in office the Bancroft-Taylor Rest Home for Deaconesses was

established in Ocean Grove. She led in the founding of the New Jersey Industrial Home for Girls at Morristown College, Morristown, Tennessee, and led the women in providing a boat, "The New Jersey," for the work of the Hilah Seward Home in Sinuk, Alaska.

Mrs. Fisk was also a leader of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She began as Secretary for the West Central States. Then she became the third president, a post she held from 1893 to 1908. While president, the National Training School for Christian Workers opened in Kansas City in 1899 as the Fisk Bible and Training School. Her influence during her lifetime was profound.

So, tonight, the evening of Ascension Day, the anniversary of Aldersgate and John Wesley's heart-warming experience, we commend to you General Clinton B. Fisk and Jeannette Crippen Fisk. This lay couple perhaps more widely known and respected than any other in the church a century ago, had their hearts strangely warmed at a Methodist altar and faithfully sought to serve their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in every manner and way they could. Dare we to do the same? This church at Sea Bright is an enduring tribute to their faithfulness. Tonight we remember and in remembering we celebrate.

As Charles Wesley taught us in another of his hymns:

Come, let us use the grace divine,
and all with one accord,
in a perpetual covenant join
ourselves to Christ the Lord;
give up ourselves, thru Jesus' power,
his name to glorify;
and promise, in this sacred hour,
for God to live and die.

The covenant we this moment make
be ever kept in mind;
We will no more our God forsake,
or cast these words behind.
We never will throw off the fear
of God who hears our vow;
and if thou are well pleased to hear,
come down and meet us now.

Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
let all our hearts receive,
present with thy celestial host

the peaceful answer give;
to each covenant the blood apply
which takes our sins away,
and register our names on high
and keep us to that day!⁴

Charles Wesley, 1762

⁴*The United Methodist Hymnal*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989, 606.

NEWS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The historical agencies of the Conference continue to promote matters of interest in the history of United Methodism. March 2, 1991, a major celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the death of John Wesley was marked in First United Methodist Church, Moorestown. Featured speaker was Dr. Richard P. Heitzenrater, General Editor of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*.

We continue to recognize major personalities, events and churches of special historical significance by placing them on the register of United Methodist Historic Sites. The 1990 Conference so designated Sea Bright Church because of its ties to General Clinton B. Fisk and his wife Jeanette Crippen Fisk, major lay leaders in the late 19th century Methodist Episcopal Church. The 1991 Conference will be asked to name John Wesley Church, Swanton and Trinity Church, Merchantville as United Methodist Historic Sites. John Wesley Church was founded 150 years ago by a runaway slave, John West, and became a charter church of the former Delaware Conference. Trinity Church founded the celebration of Children's Day, 125 years ago on June 12, 1866.

Historic Tours continue to be popular with Historical Society members. A 1990 spring tour took a bus load to visit national as well as United Methodist sites in our nation's Capital. This May's in-Conference tour brought visitors to lower Cape May County and Cape May City. An eight day bus tour, October 12 to 19, 1992, will take us to United Methodist Historic Shrines in North Carolina, Georgia, and northwestern Tennessee. You are invited to join us.

The old Estellville Methodist Church near Mays Landing in Atlantic County was built in 1834. Today it is owned by the Conference and maintained by the Historical Society through friends of the Old Estellville Methodist Church Committee. Its 157th Anniversary will be celebrated at Services to be held on Sunday, October 6th, at 2:30 and 7:00 p.m.

An important work of the Commission on Archives and History is the maintenance of the Archives Room in the Bishop's Building at Pennington School. We continue to solicit United Methodist historical books both new and old; items of historical interest relating to our churches, ministers and leading laity; and records pertaining to our

Conference Boards, Agencies and Committees that should be on deposit for safe-keeping. This year we added some Conference and District United Methodist Women's records deposited by Mrs. Carolyn Whitfield, United Methodist Women Historian. The Rev. Elwood Perkins gave us some valuable books plus historical information collected over many years from numerous Conference Churches. Mrs. Henrietta Guffick presented us with three volumes of the 1968 and 1970 General Conference of which her husband, the Rev. Dr. William R. Guffick, was a delegate. Anyone having anything to donate to the Archives can contact the Conference Historian, the Rev. Robert B. Steelman, 36 Delaware Ave., Penns Grove, NJ 08069, or the Rev. Charles A. Green, Chairman of the Commission on Archives and History, P.O. Box 6095, Philadelphia, PA 19114.

Manuscripts or ideas for future articles to be published in *The Historical Trail* can be sent to Dr. J. Hillman Coffee, Editor, 22 Lake Agape Drive, RR #1, Tabernacle, NJ 08088.

We greatly appreciate your membership in the Historical Society. Dues are \$5.00 per person or \$8.00 per couple per year. The Society also offers a Benjamin Abbott Life Membership at \$75.00 per member or church. Last year there were 196 members in the Society plus 47 Life Members, an increase of nine. Dues can be sent to Mrs. Edna Molyneaux, 768 E. Garden Road, Vineland, NJ 08360.

Still available are copies of our Conference History, *What God Has Wrought*, written by the Conference Historian and published in 1986. The cost is \$14.00 plus \$1.75 for postage and handling. They can be secured from the Conference Office, 1995 E. Marlton Pike, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.

REV. ROBERT B. STEELMAN
Historian

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